

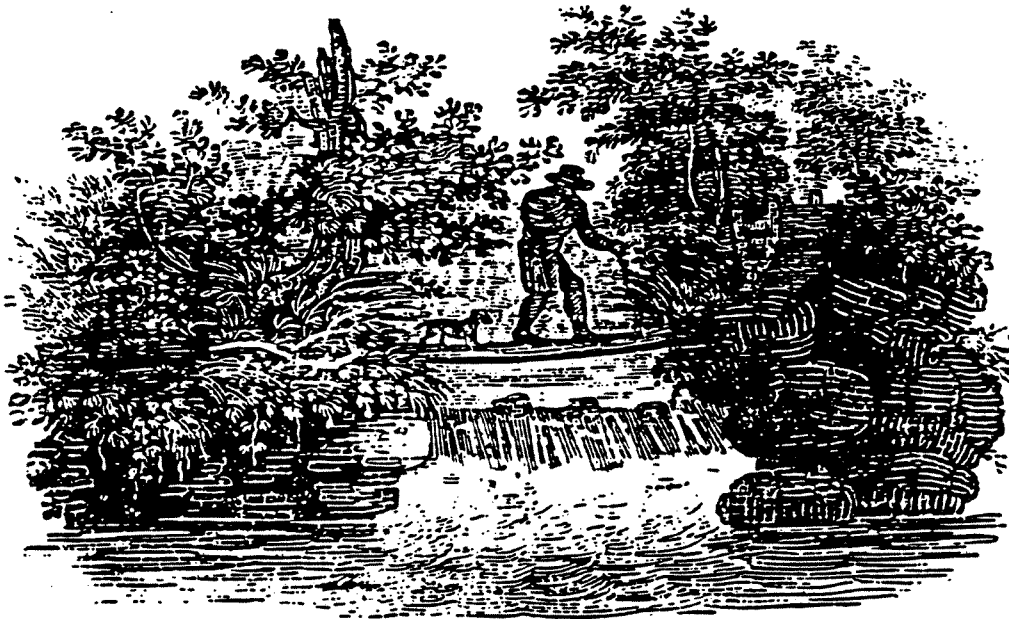
# **GREENWAYS and TRAILS MASTER PLAN for LEESBURG and LOUDOUN COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

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**Greenways Advisory Committee**

**Final Report**

**1 9 9 3**



Leesburg/Loudoun County Greenways Advisory Committee • Leesburg Department of Parks and  
Recreation • Loudoun County Department of Parks and Recreation • National Park Service -  
Mid-Atlantic Regional Office - Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

## **LOUDOUN COUNTY RESOURCES**

### **State Scenic Rivers**

Two creeks in Loudoun County, Goose Creek and a portion of Catoctin Creek, are designated in the Virginia Scenic Rivers system. This designation recognizes rivers of outstanding scenic, natural, and historical significance.

Source: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation; The 1989 Virginia Outdoors Plan.

### **Perennial Streams**

Because of their linear nature and their value for wildlife habitat and recreation, streams are excellent locations for greenways.

Source: All of Loudoun's perennial streams are identified in the Loudoun County Geographic Information System (GIS).

Limiting criterion: The Advisory Committee selected only those streams draining areas greater than 640 acres to map for greenway planning.

### **Floodplains**

Floodplains are prime candidates for greenways because of potential flooding and the resulting regulations restricting development. (Floodplains are not shown on the small maps included in this document; they appear on the Loudoun County GIS Greenways and Trails Map.)

Source: Floodplains are mapped in the Loudoun GIS, for drainages both less than and greater than 640 acres.

Limiting criterion: The Advisory Committee selected 100-year floodplains located along perennial streams (selected as above) to map for greenway planning.

### **Ridges**

Three ridges are dominant topographical features in Loudoun County. Their linear configuration, relatively natural condition, and environmental and regulatory constraints on development make these areas highly suitable for greenways.

Source: Three major ridges, Blue Ridge, Short Hill, and Catoctin Mountain, are mapped in the Loudoun GIS.

### **Natural Heritage Sites**

Incorporating these sites into the greenway network, most likely as areas without public access, may be an appropriate way to protect them. When this inventory is completed, the

Greenways Advisory Committee recommends that these sites be added as potential elements of the greenway network. (Since the sites have not yet been determined, they do not appear on the maps included in this document or on the GIS map.)

Source: The Virginia Natural Heritage Program began an inventory of the locations of threatened and endangered species and special ecological communities in Loudoun County.

### **Existing and Planned Parks**

Parks are key nodes in a greenway network.

Source: Regional and county parks, already established or proposed in the Loudoun County General Plan or Parks and Recreation Service Plan, Northern Virginia Regional Parks Authority (NVRPA) plans, or new development plans.

### **Existing and Planned Trails**

Two existing long-distance trails, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and the Washington and Old Dominion Trail, pass through Loudoun County. Only these major trails are shown on the small maps in this document; however, this category includes existing trails, greenways, and easements privately held by developments and homeowners associations, although these have not yet been mapped by the Greenways Advisory Committee. Loudoun County already has a number of such trails, but they are often unconnected. One purpose of a greenway and trail system is to bridge the gaps between these segments.

Source: National, regional, and local trails, already established or proposed in plans: National Trails System, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, Loudoun County, or development plans.

### **Historic Sites and Districts**

These are essential parts of the distinctive character of Loudoun County. (Historic sites meeting these criteria but occurring within towns are not shown on the maps in this document.)

Sources: The National Park Service, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, and Eugene Scheel, a noted Loudoun County cartographer and historian.

Limiting Criteria: Although there are hundreds of historic sites in Loudoun County, the committee decided on the following criteria to select the most significant and appropriate sites for inclusion in a greenway network: sites designated as National Historic Landmarks, sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places and open to the public, and historic districts - both those listed on the National Register and local historic districts designated by Loudoun County.

### **Historic Settlements**

The Greenways Advisory Committee recognized the importance of linking these unincorporated settlements into the greenway network because of their historic value.

Source: Local historians have identified a number of settlements that have not been officially designated, but which are historically significant.

### **Schools**

School property is open to the public and often serves as a community recreation facility. Schools could be linked to neighborhoods through a trail network; this would provide children with a safe way to walk or bike to school. (Schools occurring within towns are not shown on the small maps included in this document.)

Source: All public elementary and secondary schools within the Loudoun County School district.

### **Community Centers**

These centers also contain public land and can be well served by trail links to communities. (Community centers generally occur within towns and are not shown on the small maps included in this document.)

Source: All public community centers mapped in Loudoun County General Plan and/or identified by Loudoun County Parks and Recreation Department.

### **Discontinued Roads**

Discontinued roads are no longer maintained by the commonwealth of Virginia but continue as public rights-of-way. In many cases, these have excellent potential for trails and linkages. (Not shown on maps in this document.)

Sources: Early road maps in comparison with current maps, and Greenways Advisory Committee members Eugene Scheel and Lisa LaCivita, who are both very knowledgeable about Loudoun County history and current land use.

Limiting Criteria: Discontinued roads that link existing or proposed parks, and/or have scenic, historic, or environmental merit, and/or may be used for recreation.

### **Scenic Roads**

Source: All scenic byways mapped in Virginia Scenic Byways system (listed in Appendix B).

### **Incorporated Towns:**

Source: All towns mapped in Loudoun Geographic Information System.

## **APPENDIX G: LISTING OF PROPOSED BICYCLE ROUTES ALONG EXISTING ROADS**

While many of the trails identified in the greenway system map are intended to allow for bicycle use, some of these trails will not allow for high speed bicycling or will not provide an adequate surface for lightweight thin-tire bicycles. Additionally, one primary source of funding and assistance for bikeways, the Virginia Department of Transportation, currently favors bikeways which are built in conjunction with road improvement projects rather than independent bikeways. For these reasons, the Greenways Advisory Committee has identified a network of bicycle routes along existing roads as described in the following Bicycle Committee Report. The committee recommends that separated bicycle trails be added to these roads as conditions permit and as funding becomes available.

The Advisory Committee worked with local bicyclists and the Loudoun County Sheriff's Department to identify important bicycle routes. These routes provide transportation to most communities in the county. They already receive a significant amount of bicycle use.

The committee supports the establishment of these bicycle routes, but feels that bikeways along roads are a separate component from greenways and trails. The committee feels that implementation of these bicycle routes will primarily be the responsibility of other organizations, such as the Loudoun County Sheriff, or other plan documents, such as the county parks and recreation plan or transportation plan.

Bicycle routes could be established through a variety of actions. These include:

- Road improvements—paved, widened shoulders or separated bicycle paths along roads
- Education of drivers and bicyclists to encourage safe, harmonious coexistence and better knowledge of motor vehicle laws, rights and responsibilities of motorists and bicyclists
- Improved signage along roads used for bicycle routes
- Reduced speed limits on certain roads to improve bicycle safety
- Closure of certain roads to automobiles on special occasions, regularly or permanently

Bicyclists point out that much of the attractiveness of Loudoun County cycling comes from the county's winding country roads, lined with ancient stone walls, shaded by large trees, and blending gently into the landscape rather than being forced upon it. This character is susceptible to alteration from road widenings, which sometimes eliminate walls and trees, and remove grades and curves, for the sake of increasing automobile road speeds. Similar impacts could result from the addition of bicycle trails to existing roads, and the committee recommends that new bicycle trails be constructed sensitively to maintain the traditional character of the roads.

### **Bicycle Committee Report:**

Members of the Greenway Committee, local bicyclers, and representatives of regional bicycle organizations proposed additions to the Bicycle Plan. These recommendations are composed of two phases: short-term and long-term designations of bicycle lanes.

Short-term recommendations would be created as soon as feasible and would include:

South Eastern quadrant between Rt. 15 and 28:

Rts.	621	28
	659	637
	772	672
	625	

Central quadrant, South between Purcellville and Middleburg:

Rts.	719	626	743
	704	722-728-731	
	611	734	
	643	690	

North Central quadrant between Rt. 287 and 15:

Rts.	15	287
	662-665	668
	681-673	

Long-term (20 years) roads suggested for designation include: 9-671-698-719-626-523-50-15 South-659-Pacific Blvd.-607-606-620-748-Dawson's Gap Road.

A follow up meeting with Lieutenant Quisenberry and Sheriff Isom found their highest priorities for bicycle designations and road improvements are:

- 1) Whites Ferry to Leesburg
- 2) 287 North from Purcellville
- 3) 637 to Church Road
- 4) 621 to 50
- 5) 690 to 734

**APPENDIX I: DOCUMENTATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION  
IN LEESBURG/LOUDOUN GREENWAY PLANNING**

**REPORT ON RESULTS OF GREENWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE SPEAKERS BUREAU  
May 14, 1991**

Greenways Advisory Committee members discussed the greenway and trail draft plan and map with approximately 500 people in the last two months. This was done by giving presentations to twenty community organizations, operating a booth for two days at the Leesburg Renaissance Fair, and staffing a display at the Sterling Recycling Center on Earth Day. The latter two events attracted almost 10,000 people, so in addition to speaking directly to about 500 people, the program was exposed to approximately 2,000 more people. We also gave out over 1,000 brochures, sold fifty draft maps and obtained the signatures of 177 citizens who support this project. In addition, draft maps and fact sheets were posted at libraries and community centers throughout the county, with postcards for sending in comments.

We have received an endorsement from the land use committee of the Chamber of Commerce and hope to receive the same endorsement from the entire organization. We also have garnered an additional fifteen citizens who want to be put on the Greenways Advisory Committee's mailing list. In addition, we are still negotiating or are scheduled to give three more presentations.

In summary, as a result of a sterling performance by the Greenways Advisory Committee, at least 2,000 more people are aware of our effort, and 500 of them are well informed and, for the most part, very supportive. Many more have seen the draft plan posted and have been invited to comment by telephone or postcard; some comments have been received.

A sincere thanks to the committee members who participated in this effort:

Gary Huff  
Charles Riley  
Fred Lillis  
Bill Neville  
Jeanne Sandstrom  
Jim Stup

Lisa Lascivita  
Rick Carr  
Linda Porter  
Sharon Kearns  
Chuck Jones  
Sara McCracken